

Jim Doyle
Governor



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November 22, 2010

Honorable Mark Miller
Senate Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Finance
Room 317 East, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53702

Honorable Mark Pocan
Assembly Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Finance
Room 309 East, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Senator Miller and Representative Pocan:

Pursuant to the Joint Finance Committee's June 23, 2010 Motion 38, the Department of Children and Families submits its Five Year Plan for YoungStar, Wisconsin's Quality Rating and Improvement System.

We are excited to share our ongoing work to improve the quality of care our children receive and ensure the responsible use of public funds. Over the past two years, we have, with the Legislature's support, rebuilt the foundation of child care, tackling tough issues of fraud in the Wisconsin Shares program and increasing the safety of child care in Wisconsin while saving more than \$120 million.

In June, you gave us another powerful tool to help in our work, YoungStar. Research shows us that children who attend high quality child care settings are more likely to succeed, not only in school but also in the workplace and in life. YoungStar allows us to give our children the quality care that will prepare the Wisconsin workforce of the future.

Immediate Training and Technical Assistance

Motion 38 directed the Department to provide immediate training and technical assistance for providers in Wisconsin using the Together Quality Grows model. As of October 31, 2010, our partners delivered immediate training and technical assistance in over 200 training sessions which were attended by more than 5,000 participants. We have received overwhelming feedback from providers who say they are putting the things they learned through training to work in their child care programs.

The additional \$500,000 allocated to the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Program (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) through Motion 38 and the pending roll out of

YoungStar has increased the demand for the T.E.A.C.H. program significantly. The Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA) awarded T.E.A.C.H. scholarships to 788 providers for Fiscal Year 2010, up from just over 700 scholarships for Fiscal Year 2009.

YoungStar Five Year Plan

Through Motion 38, you asked us to come back to the Joint Finance Committee with a five year plan which would outline policy and fiscal architecture for the implementation of YoungStar. We have taken into consideration research, the experience of other states, input from a variety of stakeholders, and data collected to come up with the design for YoungStar that is within existing resources requiring no new funding.

The YoungStar five year plan, which is enclosed, contains the following elements:

- Rating System Design including: participation guidelines, point indicators, estimated number of providers at each star level, and provider qualifications (including education and experience);
- Implementation including: regional administration, estimated revenues and expenditures, and collaborations with the Department of Public Instruction, and before and after-school providers;
- Provider Outreach including: training and technical assistance, micro-grants, reconsideration and appeals process, and a communication plan; and
- Parent Outreach including: parent communication and availability of ratings for parents to search.

We are confident that the implementation of YoungStar will not only provide a way for parents to identify and choose quality child care, it will also create an incentive for providers to improve the quality of care they provide and provide one more tool in our efforts to prevent Wisconsin Shares fraud.

I appreciate your continued support of our efforts to improve Wisconsin's child care system, and I believe that through YoungStar, we can give Wisconsin children the great start they deserve to succeed in school, work and life.

Sincerely,



Reggie Bicha
Secretary

Enclosure

cc: Dan Schoof, Department of Administration
Bob Lang, Legislative Fiscal Bureau